



STATE SENATOR
DENNIS OLSHOVE

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Michigan State Seal

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CAPITOL VISITORS



Senator Olshove is joined by the 8th grade class and teacher, Dianne Karpinsky, from Immaculate Conception School.



Senator Olshove welcomes Kennedy Elementary School 4th grade students and their teacher, Cheryl Samas.



Girl Scout Troop 759 and their leaders from St. Anne's School in Warren join Senator Olshove for a photo on the Senate floor.



Students from St. Peter's Lutheran School pose for a photo on a recent visit to the State Capitol.



Choir Director, Theresa DeGrande, Charlotte Rebelein (accompanist), and the South Lake elementary Kokopeli Singers join Senator Olshove in the Rotunda of the State Capitol.

MICHIGAN'S STATE CAPITOL BUILDING

is open for public tours every half hour from 9 am to 4 pm Monday through Friday and is closed on Saturday and Sunday.

Planning a visit to Lansing?
Call 517-373-2353 to arrange your own tour of the historic Michigan State Capitol Building.

STATE SENATOR DENNIS OLSHOVE

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STATE CAPITOL NEWS



Dear Constituent:

Spring has finally arrived, and with it comes a multitude of important legislation in the Michigan State Senate. As we continue to debate various issues, I am constantly reminded of how fortunate I am to represent the 9th Senatorial District in our state legislature.

Several issues have come to the forefront over the course of the last year. We have labored diligently on halting the importation of Canadian waste. While there is still plenty of work left to do, specifically at the federal level, our initiatives in the Senate are certainly a step in the right direction. We were also able to keep Consumers Energy's Appliance Service Plan afloat by reworking the parameters by which utilities operate. Legislation allowing for an indefinite extension is currently awaiting the Governor's signature. We have also begun to explore the homestead tax exemption relating to seniors and those under respite care. As the year progresses, I hope this legislation continues to gain steam.

Thank you again for the honor of representing our area in the Michigan State Senate.

Dennis Olshove • State Senator • 9th District

How To Contact Me

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Committee Works to Ensure Affordable, Reliable Electricity

The last few months have brought a great deal of debate over the electric power industry, specifically electric deregulation. The Senate Technology and Energy Committee is holding a series of hearings dedicated to Public Act 141 of 2000 and has found there are several options available to legislators when confronting this important issue. Public Act 141 was enacted to do the following:

- allow and encourage the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) to foster competition of electric supply and regulation.
- ensure that safe, reliable electric power at a reasonable cost is available to all Michigan citizens.
- improve the opportunities for economic development and promote financially healthy and competitive utilities in Michigan.

The structure of the state's energy utilities affects every Michigan citizen. This is an issue which demands careful legislative consideration. My goal in this very complex issue is to come to a fair and equitable plan that keeps residential rates low, while allowing Michigan to be an economically competitive and desirable state for businesses to locate. Our ultimate agenda is to ensure that an energy crisis like that in California does not occur in our great state.

Olshove Asks For Hearing on Insurance Rates

In a recent letter, I asked for a hearing on recently introduced legislation to address how insurance rates are set. The legislation, which would prohibit insurance companies from using a person's geographic location to determine rates, was referred to the Senate Banking and Financial Institutions Committee.

The people of my district are continually bombarded with higher insurance rates than those of out-state Michiganders. We must continue to examine how insurance rates are set and level the playing field for constituents of the Ninth Senate District.

Consumers Appliance Service Plan to Remain Available

After several months of hard work and legislative oversight, I am pleased to announce the State Senate voted in favor of legislation that would help keep Consumers Energy's Appliance Service Plan intact.

Consumers should take some comfort in knowing that the Appliance Service Plan will remain a viable option. Not only will this ensure fair competition within the heating and cooling industry, but it will also give a large number of southeast Michigan residents some peace of mind.

Senate Bill 612 would allow Consumers Energy to continue their Appliance Service Program by creating a set of guidelines that utilities offering such programs

must follow. While these programs are not directly regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission, the Commission would have oversight and auditing authority.

The legislature had passed a similar form of the bill in October 2003 that allowed Consumers to continue the program through July 1, 2004. While the original version of the legislation was a step in the right direction, my colleagues and I in the Senate Technology and Energy Committee labored tirelessly to draft a version that would extend the program's availability beyond the summer months. With the passage of Senate Bill 612, the program will remain viable indefinitely.



Senator Olshove Promotes Job Growth

The Senate recently passed a package of bills designed to encourage the development of small high-technology start-up businesses in Michigan. Small high-tech start-up businesses provide the catalyst for growth in new and emerging industries. The bills would allow start-up businesses that employ fewer than 25 full-time employees, record no net income for two consecutive years, make less than \$1 million a year in sales, are not publicly traded,

and spend at least 15 percent on research and development, to receive tax credits on a variety of state and local taxes, including the single business tax.

This incentive package is a huge step toward expanding Michigan's technology industry. In addition, by retaining existing business and attracting start-ups, we are making strides in creating the jobs that Michigan needs.

The package of bills will help spur job creation by providing an incentive for technology-based start-up businesses to expand or locate in the state. The bills would provide these businesses with tax incentives similar to those available under the Michigan Renaissance Zone Act. Amendments were added to the bills to require companies claiming a credit to pay it back if they move out of the state within three years.

Olshove Ensures Seniors Do Not Lose Homestead Exemption

I have introduced a bill to help seniors who are ill to retain their property tax exemption for their principal residence or "homestead." My bill, Senate Bill 1090, stops seniors from losing their 18-mill homeowner's exemption when they are temporarily away from home, in a health care facility, or being cared for by relatives or friends.

Under current law, it is possible for seniors who are not living in their homes to pay higher

property tax bills if a local assessor believes that the home is no longer the senior's "principal residence." I believe that is not fair to our seniors and that they should be allowed to keep the tax exemption for their home while they are away from it.

Often, when people are ill, they are forced to move into a health care facility or in with friends and relatives who can provide them with daily care.

I believe it is wrong to take away their homestead exemption because of such circumstances.

As long as the senior does not rent out the property or claim another exemption, they should be entitled to keep their current exemption.

I am pleased that 17 other Senators from both parties have co-sponsored my bill, and I hope that we can get it passed into law to correct this injustice to our seniors.



Olshove Fights Solid Waste Imports

I recently worked hard on the legislative package in the State Senate which addresses solid waste issues in Michigan. The package includes one of my bills, Senate Bill 500. The bill would increase the penalties for landfill administrators for failure to comply with disposal prohibitions set forth in the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act. It would also create an environmental education fund which uses monies that ensure future environmental problems are not ignored. Other pieces of the package include establishing a moratorium on new landfill construction, expanding the list of items banned in Michigan landfills, strengthening enforcement

mechanisms, and requiring landfill operators to report annually on their remaining capacity.

As we have begun to explore the hazards involved with the importation of solid waste, this package became necessary as a first step toward curbing this practice. The well-being of Michigan's environmental landscape remains a priority. It has become very clear that Michigan citizens are tired

of welcoming out-of-state waste. With this legislation, we are making headway toward keeping Michigan a beautiful state we can all be proud of.



Senator Olshove watches as Governor Granholm signs Senate Bill 500 into law.

Governor Requested to Maintain K-12 Funding

I recently urged the Governor to leave 20(j) school funding intact. My goal was to implore the Governor to recognize the importance of 20(j) funding to the education of the children in the 9th Senatorial District and throughout the state.

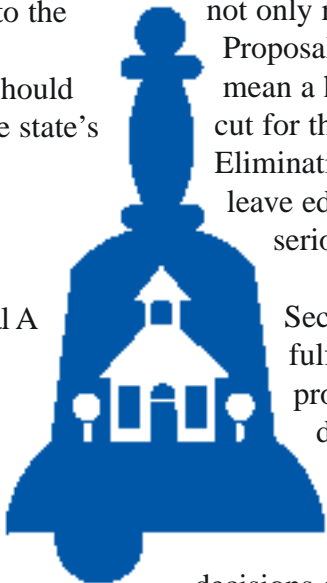
As a key component of the Michigan School Aid Act, Section 20(j) funds are essential to the vitality of Michigan's educational system. We should not attempt to balance the state's books by sacrificing our children's educational opportunities.

A primary goal of Proposal A was to close the funding gap between in-formula and out-of-formula districts. To do this, policy makers promised to raise the base funding level for poorer districts and to hold other districts "harmless." However, after the implementation of Proposal A, many districts realized they were not being "held harmless" and had actually seen a relative decrease in state funding. In 1999, the

legislature recognized this problem and passed section 20(j) to the school aid act.

Unfortunately, the formula to calculate 20(j) is complicated. This confusion, along with the current K-12 budget constraints, has brought section 20(j) to the forefront of the K-12 funding debate. Cutting 20(j) funds would not only represent a reversal of Proposal A, but it would also mean a highly disproportionate cut for the 20(j) schools. Eliminating this funding will leave educational programs in serious jeopardy.

Section 20(j) is a fulfillment of the original promise to hold school districts harmless with the implementation of Proposal A. These schools make financial decisions on a multi-year basis and consider these funds a critical part of this decision making. To take that away would be nothing less than irresponsible.



Resolution Passed to Help Monitor Water Quality

I recently supported the adoption of a resolution in the Senate that would develop a pilot project to provide real-time monitoring of water quality for Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River. With the recent accidental release of more than 40,000 gallons of chemical solvents from an oil plant in Canada, the vulnerability of the water supply in this highly populated region became a concern.

The resolution would urge the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the Office of the Great Lakes to work with the Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes National Program Office to develop the monitoring project to help protect people and the environment from spills of harmful materials. Currently, the DEQ monitors these waters sporadically throughout the year. With real-time monitoring, any problems that arise will be recognized before any major damage could be done.